

The State of the Muslim Ummah in Contemporary World

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ABSTRACT

The current state of affairs in the Muslim Ummah called for concern by every conscious Muslim contemporarily. The Islamic civilisation which introduced the whole world into the world of research and development, political organisation, economic prosperity and equality as well as cultural enrichment is now languishing in backwardness and crises. This study analysed the current condition of the Muslim Ummah in the present world based on the predicaments that are bedeviling the Islamic world. The problem is the nature and situation in which all the values and promises of Islamic civilisation are not utilised by the Muslims which threw them into their current comatose condition. The research used secondary sources of data such as the Quran, Hadith, books, journals and reports and statistics from organisations and agencies. The data collected were analysed critically using statistical and descriptive-analytical method to discuss some important themes of the subject matter. The work discovered that the current state of affairs of the Muslim Ummah is undesirable. It is dominated and encircled by internal crises, leadership failure, disunity, economic, political, social, cultural, military and technological backwardness in comparison with their Western counterparts. This has not been natural. The Decline of leadership in the Muslim world, Crusades and colonialism contributed to the predicaments of the Muslim world. The work suggested that the previous generation of Muslims faced trials and tribulations but they persevered and faced the challenges until God have mercy on them and rescue their situation. The same should be adopted by the present Ummah in dealing with its problems

KEYWORDS

Civilisation; contemporary; Islam; Muslim; Ummah; world

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a pure religion with a well-designed set of teachings, practices, belief system and an all-encompassing means of life including the politics, economy, society, culture and the spiritual aspects. The universal teachings of Islam penetrated the globe in a most rapid speed ever witnessed in the history of all religions in the world (Al Mawdudi, 2000). The believers in Islam who are the Muslims are magnified and elevated to the exalted position of being the best of all mankind by the universe's Creator Allah (SWT) in the Holy Quran Chapter 3 Verse 110. Allah (SWT) also revealed in the Quran (Ch.2 v.103) that He showers His blessings upon the Muslim Ummah when He united them after a deep animosity that ensued among them.

Prior to the resurgence of Islam under the final Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Arabian Peninsula which was chosen with the burden of conveying the final message of God was living in a derogatory and a despised condition called 'Jahiliyyah'. The Jahiliyyah period is the zenith of immorality and decadence of mankind. Central themes that occupied the period

includes idolatry, fornication, adultery, gambling, usury, communal feud and clashes over trivial matters, killing and burying of female daughters, incest, sodomy, lesbianism, robbery, injustice and other forms of despicable conditions that a man can ever live (Qutb, 1990).

When the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent with the final revelation (the Holy Quran), the menace of Jahiliyyah was purified within a short period of a time. Arabs were united, immorality, decadence, impurity, injustice, wickedness, communal strife were all eradicated and replaced with justice, equality, knowledge and wisdom. In few years of the Prophet's lifetime, Islam emerged into the global limelight and led to the prominence of the Muslims. The hitherto, entrepreneur-Arabs succeeded in spreading Islam through their merchandise activities. The world was united and purified within a short period of time (Ibn Kathir, 2000 and Bowering 2013).

Before the 50 years of the Islamic Kingdom, the Muslims earned an outstanding respect of the Persians, Romans, Africans and Europeans. Islam was spread into all nook and crannies of the world in less than 70 years. Within the first 100 years of the Islamic global leadership, the Islamic state became famous for knowledge and intellectualism in all fields of human endeavour including scientific discoveries, politics, philosophy, astronomy, physics, mathematics, embryology, geography, law, geometry and all forms of knowledge. Various amazing discoveries were made and advances in knowledge continued for the next 400 years of the Islamic world and the world at large (Ansary, 2009). The greatness of Islam was attained within a short period of a time because of the inherent universality in its teaching which combined politics, economy, culture, society and spiritual aspects all in a disentangling nature for the promotion of human values, human rights, human dignity, global peace and equality. (Mubarakufiri, 2000).

Sadly, these values, respect, dignity and glory of Islam declined steadily for over 1000 years which throws the Muslim Ummah in the state of confusion. The current state of the Muslim Ummah is comparable to that of the Jahiliyyah period by Qutb (1990). Indeed, Qutb (1990) pronounced that the current state of the Muslim Ummah is worse than the Arabian Pre-Islamic Jahiliyyah. Moral decadence, economic stagnation, political confusion, social degradation and cultural transplant of the Western world succeeded in obliterating the Muslim Ummah. Abdulkadir Awdah (2005) lamented that Islam is now wallowing in-between ignorant followers and incapable scholars which has been the bane of the Islamic world's strive towards development contemporarily. Extremism has taken over the ideal and moderate values, as well as the teaching of Islam, which provides an opportunity for the external enemies to recruit and sponsor the misguided youth towards fundamentalism and terrorism (Al Qaradawi, 1991). Islam has now become the shadow of itself and the Muslim have turned into subservient lackeys of other civilisations.

Drawing from the above antecedents, this paper examined the state of the Muslim Ummah today, the predicaments and the alternative strategies towards reviving the Islam of yesterday in today's life of the Muslim.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research is an intellectual analytical discourse which utilised descriptive analysis and text interpretation in its methodology. In consideration of the subject matter of study and its broadness, the study adopted the secondary sources of data. The data collected included sources from the Holy Quran, Prophetic Hadith in which only the authentic ones are cited in the work, books, Journal articles, reports, statistics and data from international agencies and organisations. The data collected were used in analysing the subject matter of study through the use of comparative and statistical analysis where tables and charts were prepared to discuss the intended issues or themes in the discussions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The State of The Muslim Ummah: Issues And Challenges: Some Variables

A closer glance at some variables and indicators of the current state of affairs in the Muslim world will signify danger and it will portend a serious concern for every conscious Muslim that a gigantic task is ahead for the revival of Islam and the lost glory of the Muslim World. The world economy is not controlled by the Muslim world. An examination of the top ten (10) economies in the world revealed that no single Muslim country is among the top ten (10) leading global economic powers.

Table 1. World Biggest Economies in 2018

S/No.	Country	Value in Trillions
1.	United States	20.4
2.	China	14
3.	Japan	5.1
4.	Germany	4.2
5.	United Kingdom	2.94
6.	France	2.93
7.	India	2.85
8.	Italy	2.18
9.	Brazil	2.14
10.	Canada	1.8

Source: International Monetary Fund (2018)

The above indicates that no single Muslim country falls within the first ten strong economies of the world. The measurement of country's economic value in money terms however, cannot be taken as the measurement of welfare indicators economically as some Muslim countries may have higher level of standard of living or welfare than some of the top ten here. Furthermore, the statistics can be manipulated sometimes for political and economic purposes by the IMF because the dominant controllers of the world data are not from the Muslim world even though, there are methods that are universally adopted and used for the measurement. Additionally, the above does not translate into possession of economic resources. A glance at the natural resources' endowment in especially the most valuable one; oil disclosed that the Islamic countries are faring well in this aspect as presented in the table below.

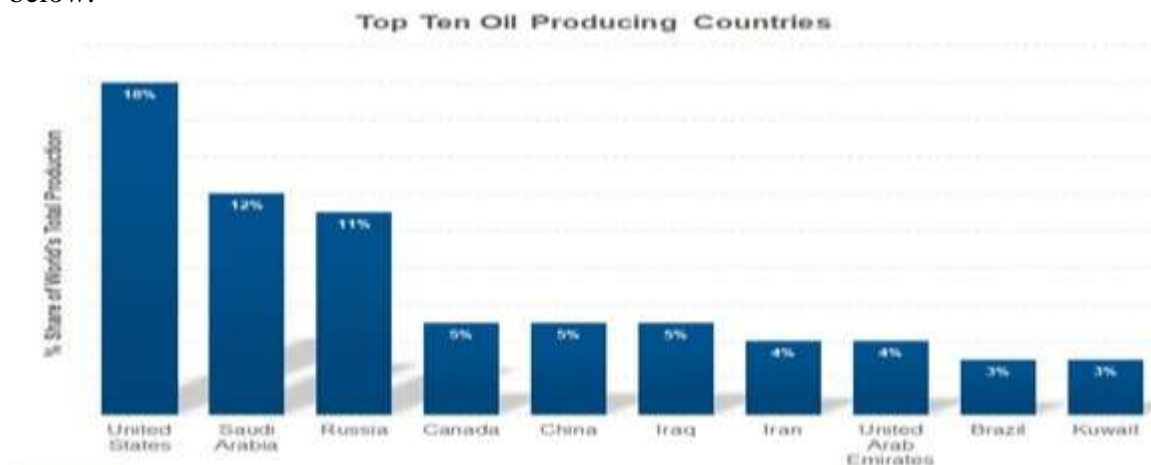


Figure 1. World Top Ten Oil Producers in 2019

Source: US Energy Information Administration (Retrieved from Google Photos).

From the figure above, it is realised that even the oil production which has been identified predominantly with the Islamic countries particularly the Arab countries is now gradually

being taken over by other countries. Although, the Islamic countries still maintain their hold onto oil production, the danger ahead is the fact the European and American countries are busy searching for alternative to oil to block the Islamic countries' hegemony in the oil sector. The Islamic countries are not utilising the leverage of the oil possession to determine the direction of the world politics and economy the way the nuclear powers are using its possession for balance of power in the international system.

The world is today shifting ground economically from the production economy to service and ICT economy. This is believed to be the future of the world economy and the ability to transform a country's economy from manufacturing to services and ICT will determine the future world powers. Yet, the Muslim world is lagging behind in these perspective as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Global ICT Development Index 2017

S/No.	Country	IDI Value
1.	Iceland	8.98
2.	Republic of South Korea	8.85
3.	Switzerland	8.74
4.	Denmark	8.71
5.	United Kingdom	8.65
6.	Hong Kong	8.61
7.	Netherlands	8.49
8.	Norway	8.47
9.	Luxembourg	8.47
10.	Japan	8.43

Source: ICT Development Index 2017.

It is clear from the table above that the future of the world economy and influence is escaping the Muslim world because no single Islamic state is found among the top ten ICT centres. Likewise, politically, the permanent membership of the Security Council's composition has no representation from any Islamic state. The United Nations Security Council is the body with the utmost prerogatives of an absolute and final decision making on global security matters. Consider the table below for an illustration of the permanent members.

Table 3. Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council

S/No.	Country
1.	United States
2.	United Kingdom
3.	Russia
4.	China
5.	France

Source: United Nations 2019.

The implication of the non-presence of any Muslim country in the UNSC is that strategic security decisions were taken, are taken and can be taken in future without any regards to interest of Islam or the Muslims. It was because of lack of this veto power in the Council that unanimous decision was taken to attack Afghanistan in 2001, a controversial decision was taken in 2003 to attack Iraq and several outrageous hypocritical decisions full of double standard are taken globally. This lack of representation in the UNSC led to the total disarmament of the Muslim world from possessing nuclear weapons. The Islamic countries are counted among the full list of the nuclear free zones except Pakistan. The table below indicates the countries that possessed nuclear weapons.

Table 4. Countries with Possession of Nuclear Weapons in the World

S/No.	Country	Warheads (Deployed and Total)
1.	United States	1,600-6,185
2.	Russia	1,600-6500
3.	United Kingdom	120-215
4.	France	280-300
5.	China	0-290
6.	India	0-140
7.	Pakistan	0-160
8.	North Korea	0-30
9.	Israel	0-90

Source: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 2019

From the outlook above, it is clear and simple that only one Islamic country has so far possessed nuclear warhead; Pakistan. Allah (SWT) in the Holy Quran commanded the believers to prepare for the unbelievers in all aspects (Chapter 8 verse 60). Unfortunately, the other side of the world is the one that is preparing for the unforeseen in terms of nuclear war. Currently, Iran and Turkey are making efforts in nuclear proliferation but are tight under various agreements by the United Nations, Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), IAEA. EURATOM and NATO (Khan, 2010).



Figure 2. Map of the Middle East 2019

Source: Google Map 2019

In the case of security globally, the Muslim world has been drifted into abyss and it is the most insecure countries in the world emanating from terrorism, internal uprisings, social and economic insecurity and leadership failure. The 2018 Global Terrorism Index indicated this position as shown below.

Table 5. Countries Ranking in Global Terrorism Index in 2018

Rank	Country	Score
1	Iraq	9.746
2	Afghanistan	9.391
3	Nigeria	8.660
4	Syria	8.315
5	Pakistan	8.181

6	Somali	8.020
7	India	7.568
8	Yemen	7.534
9	Egypt	7.345
10	Philippines	7.181

Source: *Global Terrorism Index 2018*

Out of the ten countries that are ranked higher in terrorism index in 2018, only two are not Muslim countries which are India and Philippines. Insecurity, internal crisis in Syria, Yemen, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt and other Islamic countries all together affect the Muslims. Nigeria being also a Muslim-dominated country is one of the affected by the issue of insurgency in some parts of Northern Nigeria. the causes of global terrorism are directly linked with America and other world powers during the Cold War when they sponsored the formation of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan to help them fight the Communist Russia (Chomsky 2000 and Mamdani 2004). In the 21st century, the destruction of Iraq in the Middle East paved the way for the establishment of ISIS terror group and the collapse of Libya by America and NATO created undeterred routes for the spread of weapons and terror into the Sub-Saharan African Muslim states of Nigeria, Mali, Chad, Niger and Cameroon.

The implications of labeling the Muslims and Islam with terrorism is that it led to the emergence of what is known today as 'Islamophobia'. The term Islamophobia is identified as the ideology and theory that has a target of racism and discrimination and other related phenomena directed towards the perpetuation and sustenance of negatively evaluated meaning of Islam and Muslim. It is a campaign of calumny and blasphemy full of distortions, prejudices, fallacies, exaggeration and deliberate stereotyping of the Muslims as terrorist and uncultured and the religion of Islam being perceived as a religion which promotes violence. This has been carried out by the Western media, policy makers, intellectuals and other related group consciously without an adequate knowledge of the religion of Islam. The target is to create anti-Muslim hatred and to arrest the rapid spread of Islam in the West (Carr, 2016).

Islamophobia has been cast out as the typical anti-thesis of Western civilisation which creates fear among the Western world (Beydoun, 2018). Islamophobia is not a new form or characteristics of bigotry. Anti-Semitism was presence in Europe in the Second World War. Islamophobia has been identified (Beydoun, 2018) as private which involves individual fear against the Muslims and Islam, structural Islamophobia supported and sponsored by policymakers in Europe and America and dialectical Islamophobia. Dialectical Islamophobia is the way in which the structural or state-sponsored propaganda is shaping the attitudes and perceptions of the public towards the Muslims and Islam in the world.

Islamophobia has been taking to the global level where German press are involved in propaganda (Bruce, Cohen and Muhammad Brandner, 2012) Moroccan youth who are Muslims suffered in Netherlands (Pakes, 2018), intellectuals in Italy are found to have been involved in propaganda and lies against Islam (Cousin & Vitale, 2018), threats of the Muslim deliberately created in Sweden (Mulinari & Neergaard, 2018), the US media in the post-9/11 attacks demonised the Iraqi Muslims and Islam reproducing fear in the United States in the name of fear of Muslim as terrorists (Wright 2016 and Bonn, 2018), criminalising dissent voices against Gaza torturing and war against terrorism in Britain (Gilmore, 2018) and a failed attempt at demonising Islam in Australia after the 'Lindsay Leaflet Scandal' (Dunn & Kamp, 2018). The fear of Islam in France in both context and reaction has made France an even more unique case of Muslim hatred (Doyle, 2016).

Islamophobia though, a negative stereotyping of Islam and a sabotage to it, has however, turned out to be a blessing in disguise to Islam and Muslims in other ways. For instance, after the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Centre in the US, the intensified propaganda and

Islamophobia led to curiosity in perceiving Islam and that has led to rapid convert of Americans and Europeans to Islam in an unprecedented manner in the regions. The convert coupled with migration from the Middle East of Arab Muslims made Islam the fastest growing religion in the world. The past three decades accounted for rapid growth of Islam in Europe. From 30 million in 1990, the population of Muslims in Europe reached 44 million in 2010 and is projected to rise to 60 million in 2030, an approximate 10% of the anticipated population of Europe by that year. The unique case is Ireland's Muslim population which is expected to increase threefold between 2010 and 2030, the biggest increase in any European state as reported by PEW Research Centre on religion (Carr, 2016). Muslims' population growth in Europe is expected to reach a historical 14% by the year 2050 especially if the migration continues as shown in the figure below.

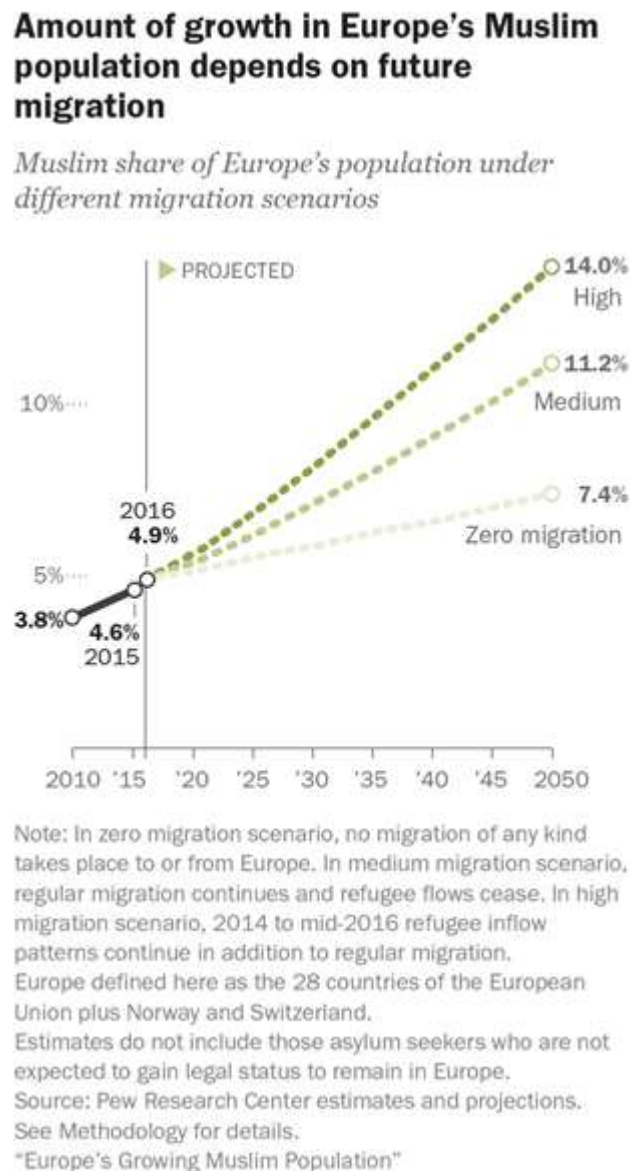


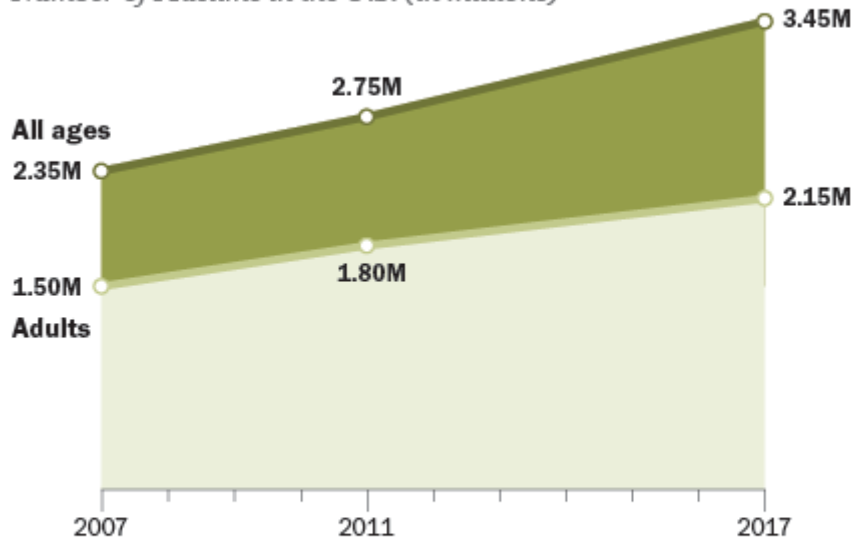
Figure 3. Expected Muslims Population Growth in Europe in 2050

Source: PEW Research Centre 2018.

Likewise, in the US, where the doctrine of Islamophobia is indoctrinated from the inception in modern times particularly in post-9/11, the Muslim population continues to grow rapidly. This has been shown in the graph below.

Number of Muslims in the U.S. continues to grow

Number of Muslims in the U.S. (in millions)



Note: U.S. Muslim population estimates reflect a correction made on Nov. 9, 2017.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on analysis of surveys of Muslim Americans in 2007, 2011 and 2017 combined with U.S. Census data.

"U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream"

Figure 4. Population Growth in the US from 2007 to 2017

Source: PEW Research Centre 2018.

In terms of development, the situation is the same with the above statistics. The Human Development Report and index indicate poor performance in the Muslim states.

Table 6. Human Development Index 2018 for Some Selected Countries

S/No.	Country	Rank	HDI Value
10 High Performers			
1.	Norway	1	0.953
2.	Switzerland	2	0.944
3.	Australia	3	0.939
4.	Ireland	4	0.938
5.	Germany	5	0.936
6.	Iceland	6	0.935
7.	Hong Kong	7	0.933
8.	Sweden	8	0.933
9.	Singapore	9	0.932
10.	Netherlands	10	0.931
10 Middle Performers			
11.	Saint Lucia	91	0.747
12.	Fiji	92	0.741
13.	Mongolia	93	0.741
14.	Dominican Rep.	94	0.736
15.	Jordan	95	0.735

16.	Tunisia	96	0.735
17.	Jamaica	97	0.732
18.	Tonga	98	0.726
19.	St. Vincent	99	0.723
20.	Suriname	100	0.720

10 Low Performers

21.	Mozambique	180	0.437
22.	Liberia	181	0.435
23.	Mali	182	0.427
24.	Burkina Faso	183	0.423
25.	Sierra Leone	184	0.419
26.	Burundi	185	0.417
27.	Chad	186	0.404
28.	South Sudan	187	0.388
29.	Central Africa Rep.	188	0.367
30.	Niger	189	0.354

Source: United Nations Development Report 2018.

The UNDP report in 2018 which presents human development rankings of all the world countries indicates that in the year 2018, all the countries that are ranked in the highest ranking did not include any of the Muslim countries. Most of the countries fall either among the average performers or low ranking in the bottom if the full report is adequately perused. This study used a sample of ten (10) from the top, ten (10) from the middle performers and ten (10) from the bottom. While there is no any Islamic country in the top ten, there are several ones in the bottom performers such as Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali. Most of the Muslim countries fall back economically due to low level of technology, dependency on the Western world and neglect of the Islamic values and teachings.

It should be noted that the sufferings and tribulations of the Muslims in contemporary world is not unexpected or unpredicted. Several of the sufferings of Islam under the New World Order have been captured by Zaid (2014) as discussed above. The Holy Quran revealed in different chapters and verses (Chapter 2 verses 155 and 214) that the Muslim Ummah should not expect soft landing or a life without trials and tribulations. It is our responses and perseverance that will rescue the situation by making our Creator to be merciful upon us. The Prophet (PBUH) himself underwent several tormentous trials and tribulations during his lifetime. He was reported to have said:

“Of all mankind the prophets undergo the severest of trials, and after them the awsiya (closest to them)’, and after them the elect to the extent of their nobility. Indeed, the believer undergoes trial in proportion to his good deeds. So, one whose faith is sound and whose deeds are good, his trials are also more severe. That is indeed because God Almighty did not make this world a place for rewarding the believer and punishing the unbeliever. And one whose faith is feeble and whose (good) deeds are few faces fewer tribulations. Verily, tribulations hasten towards the believer with greater speed than rainwater towards the earth’s depths.” (Sahih Al Bukhari Vol. IV Hadith 3456).

In another Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH), mentioned that the Muslims will face the trial of leadership in their communities and he urged us to be patient and obedient to them.

“The Prophet said, "Whoever notices something which he dislikes done by his ruler, then he should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the company of the Muslims even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic period of Ignorance (as rebellious sinners). (Sahih Al Bukhari Vol. IV Hadith 1456).

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) mentioned in an authentic Hadith in Sahih Al Bukhari that:

“The world communities will assemble upon you and attack you just the way you encircled a bowl of food”. The companions asked him, isn’t because we are few in number that day? The Prophet (PBUH) responded that “No, in those days you are more in number than today but you are overwhelmed by weakness”. They asked, which weakness oh Messenger of Allah? He responded “the despise for death and the love for worldly materialism” (Sahih Al Bukhari, Vol. IV 6335).

Thus, it can be understood from the above Quranic verses and Prophetic Hadith that the current condition of Muslims and Islam in the world is predicted and pre-destined by God Himself but the predictions and destiny revealed also that the Muslim world will triumph at the end of the day. The West is already preparing for the Biblical prophesies of Apocalypse which will be a showdown and the final battle between two gigantic armies. We should know that we cannot triumph by just praying and lamenting our conditions. The Islamic world has the capacity and potentials for developing its own civilisation above any civilisation in the world if we work hard and face the challenges accordingly.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Muslim Ummah is contemporarily in an undesired state of affairs as a result of the predicaments internally and externally that are afflicting the Muslims in the current unjust world system. The system is dominated by powerful non-Muslim countries who have no feelings for justice or equity in their dealings with other world countries. In the realm of history, the Islamic world once flourished and was the beckon of hope and light for the world. The Islamic civilisation introduced before the world an unprecedented political, economic, social and cultural development full of wisdom and intellectualism. This glory was lost because of disunity, leadership crises, neglect of the pure teaching of Islam and its practices and the interaction with the Western amoral system which is secular and anti-Islamic during the period of imperialism and colonialism and finally globalisation. The study recommends that the current situation of the Muslim Ummah was also faced by the first generation of Muslims from the Prophet (PBUH) himself and his companions but their persistence and perseverance earned them the glory and intervention of Allah. The current Muslim Ummah has no any solution rather than the one adopted by the first generation to rescue their situation and to triumph.

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